# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received MAY 22 1987 date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

. ypc un chime	- combined alphicans a construction	
1. Nan	1e	
historic	Nebraska-Kansas Public Land Survey The	(NeHBS # RH00-062) matic Group (NeHBS # JF00-072)
and/or common	N/A	
2. Loca	ation	
street & number	See Continuation Sheet	$rac{ ext{N/A}}{ ext{L}}$ not for publication
city, town	N/A N/A vicinity of	en de la companya de La companya de la co
state	N/A code N/A county N/	
3. Clas	sification	
Category  district building(s) structure siteX object	X public N/A occupied X private unoccupied both work in progress Public Acquisition Accessible M/A in process being considered X yes: unrestricted	Present Use agriculturemuseumcommercialparkeducationalprivate residenceentertainmentreligiousX_governmentscientificindustrialtransportationmilitaryother:
4. Own	er of Property	
name	See Continuation Sheet	
street & number	N/A	
	N/A vicinity of	state N/A
5. Loca	ation of Legal Description	
courthouse regis	stry of deeds, etc. See Continuation Sheet	
street & number		,
	N/A	-1.
6. Repi	resentation in Existing Su	state N/A
u. nepi	escitation in Existing Su	iiveys
itle Nebrask	a Historic Buildings Survey has this property	y been determined eligible? yesX no
date	On-going	federal state countylocal
depository for su	rvey records Nebraska State Historical Soci	ety
city, town	Lincoln	state Nebraska

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Location

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Each monument marks the actual point where several counties meet. Since the monuments are larger than a point, they lie in more than one county.

#### RHOO-062

Vicinity of Rulo Nebraska Kansas	code 031 code 020	counties Richardson counties Brown Doniphan	code 147 code 013 043
JF00-072			
Vicinity of Maha	aska		
Kansas	code 020	counties Republic	code 157
		Washington	201
Nebraska	code 031	counties Jefferson	code 095
		Thayer	169

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The actual survey monuments are part of the public domain, which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The land on which the monuments lie is owned by various public and private individuals.

Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Denver Federal Center-Building 50 6th Kippling Street Denver, Colorado 80225

#### RH00-062

HBJ Farms, Inc. White Cloud, Kansas 66094

Leonard H. Fee and Pauline Fee Rural Route Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

#### JF00-072

Leslie J. Cossaart Rural Route Mahaska, Kansas 66955

Walter M. and Frances Schnelle 618 Woodland Drive Washington, Kansas 66968

Nebraska Board of Educational Lands & Funds P.O. Box 94986 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4986

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#### RH00-062

Register of Deeds Richardson County Courthouse Falls City, Nebraska 68355

Register of Deeds Brown County Courthouse Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

Register of Deeds Doniphan County Courthouse Troy, Kansas 66087

#### JF00-072

Register of Deeds Jefferson County Courthouse Fairbury, Nebraska 68352

Register of Deeds Thayer County Courthouse Hebron, Nebraska 68370

Register of Deeds Republic County Courthouse Belleville, Kansas 66935

Register of Deeds Washington County Courthouse Washington, Kansas 66968

### 7. Description

Condition  X excellent	Check one X unaltered Altered	Check oneX original site moved dateN/A	
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The cast iron monument marking the point of intersection of the  $40^\circ$  North latitude line and the bluff on the west bank of the Missouri River is six feet high and tapers from a 16" base to 7" at its top. Its north side is marked "Nebraska", the south "Kansas", the east "1854", and the west "40°N. Lat.". located by four witness stones 12" x 3", set 10 feet from the monument. The sandstone monument marking the point of intersection of the Sixth Principal Meridian and the 40°N latitude base line is 14" high with small stones anchoring the base. This is the extant portion of the original 48"x15"x6" monument. Also extant are two of the four witness stones set 10 feet from the monument. The stone to the south is sandstone and measures 21"x11"x2" and the one to the west is limestone, measuring 18"x10"x3". This is a thematic nomination that consists of two separate sites with a total of eight contributing objects (five and three each).

RH00:062 This monument is a hollow cast iron shaft 1" thick, weighing between 500 and 600 pounds. It is six feet high with a flange base 16"x16". Directly above the base it is 11"x11" tapering to 7"x7" at the top which is beveled. The monument is marked on its four sides with raised cast upper case Roman letters that are 1 1/4" high. The north side reads "Nebraska", the south "Kansas", the west "40° N. Lat.", and the east "1854". A St. Louis company cast the monument in 1854. It was set in place on May 8, 1855, by Charles A. Manners, a U.S. Deputy Surveyor. Manner's field notes state that "said monument or cast iron post was erected by setting the same two feet in the ground with a flat stone well bedded underneath it for a foundation and the excavation around the post well rammed with earth and small stones...the sides of the monument facing the cardinal points". Manners also set four stones about 12 inches in width and 3 inches thick in the ground ("witness stones") about one foot deep and ten feet from the monument, one in each of the cardinal directions, which he connected by a trench ten inches deep. marked four black oak trees, one in each of the four sections that meet at the monument, indicating the appropriate section, township and range for each.

In 1924, after having been toppled and set upright in an erroneous location, the monument was reset in a sturdier foundation. Leo M. Petersen set a cement base 14x30x30 inches on top of the original limestone base. At the exact point of intersection of the lines connecting the witness stones he set (14 inches deep in the cement base and resting upon the limestone) an iron

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pipe three feet long and three inches in diameter, with a brass cap on the top marked "Kansas Initial Corner 1924" and "SC TIN", "R18E S36" and "R19E S31." He then placed the original cast iron shaft down over the iron survey pipe and secured it with two strap irons on four bolts set firmly in the cement base. This monument stands today in an excellent state of preservation. It is six and one-half miles southeast of Rulo, Nebraska, about 200 feet west of the road between Rulo and White Cloud, Kansas, and on top of the first bluff bank overlooking the Missouri River to the east. It stands on the point where the parallel of  $40^{\circ}$  N latitude (Kansas-Nebraska state line) intersects the top of the bluff on the west bank of the Missouri River, and marks the initial point of survey for Kansas and Nebraska.

JF00:072 This monument was set June 11, 1856, by Charles A. Manners in a flat area of prairie at the point where the Sixth Principal Meridian intersects the  $40^{\circ}$  N latitude base line (the point where present day Thayer and Jefferson Counties, Nebraska, and Washington and Republic Counties, Kansas, meet). Made from red sandstone, the mounument measured  $48"\times15"\times6"$  and was set to correspond with the cardinal points, with its flat sides facing north and south and its edges east and west. The north face was inscribed with the letter "N" and "T1N", while the south face read "K" and "T1S". The east side was inscribed with "R1E" and the west with "1856" and "R1W". Manners field notes state that the stone was set "2 ft in the ground and firmly fastened with smaller stones about its base". Following accepted procedure, Manners also set witness stones at a distance of ten feet from the monument in each of the cardinal directions. He describes them as follows:

"on the North Limestone 20x10x2 on the East Limestone 19x11x3 on the South Limestone 21x11x2 on the West Limestone 18x10x3"

Present day surveyors had taken the location of this monument for granted, although it was not visible above ground. It was unearthed in 1976 by the U.S. Geodetic Survey and then reburied, since it lies in the center of a county road. On October 25, 1986, 16 surveyors representing five states once again unearthed the monument. Buried in the ground was the bottom 14" of the sandstone marker with small stones about its base. Also found was the sandstone set ten feet to the south and the limestone set ten feet to the south and the limestone set ten feet to the west. The upper approximately 34" of

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### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

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the monument had apparently been broken off at a much earlier time. The top 8" had been found in a nearby ditch by the owner of adjacent property. Visible on that portion was "1856" and "R1W". The group of surveyors spearheading the project to locate the monument intend to excavate the adjacent area in the spring of 1987 hoping to locate the two remaining witness stones and the middle portion of the monument, with the goal of restoring it.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 X 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	theck and justify below  community planning  conservation  economics  education  engineering  x exploration/settlemen  industry  invention	landscape architectur law literature military music t philosophy politics/government	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1855, 1856 to 1937	Builder/Architect N	1/A	

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

These surveyors' monuments and the witness stones that locate them are significant on the state level in the area of settlement for their role in the surveying of the public domain and resultant land transfer in five states. The cast iron monument located on a bluff above the Missouri River marks the initial point for survey in Nebraska and Kansas and was the reference point for survey in much of the first settled areas of these two states. The sandstone monument marks the intersection of the Sixth Principal Meridian and its base line (40° N latitude parallel) from which public lands were surveyed in all of Kansas and Nebraska and parts of Wyoming, Colorado and South Dakota. Since these monuments have been used, from the time they were set up to the present for public land surveys, their significance ranges from 1855-56 to the present. Historically, however, this period would end in 1937.

#### HISTORY

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 opened vast amounts of the Public Domain for settlement. In Kansas, hundreds of Missourians, most of whom were pro-slavery, immediately staked claims just across the Kansas-Missouri border. While settlement proceeded somewhat slower in Nebraska, there was still an urgent need to locate and identify the land so that ownership could be easily transfered from the federal government to private individuals. Arrangements were quickly made for the region to be surveyed, starting at the Missouri River. On August 1, 1854, John Calhoun was appointed Surveyor General of Nebraska and Kansas. On August 26, 1854, the Commissioner of the General Land Office sent instructions to Calhoun to determine the location of the 40 N latitude parallel and to survey it west from the Missouri River. Captain Thomas J. Lee of the U.S. Topographical Engineers determined by astronomical observation the point of interstection of the 40°N parallell and the river. This point was to be the initial point for all survey in Nebraska and Kansas, and the 40°N parrallel became the base line for surveys from the Sixth Principal Meridian (Sixth P.M.) as well as the boundary between Nebraska and Kansas. J.P. Johnson, a deputy surveyor set an oak post at the initial point on November 17, 1854, and proceeded to survey west 108 miles to the Sixth P.M.

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The cast iron monument marking the initial point was ordered by Captain Lee when he returned to St. Louis, with the instructions that upon completion it be forwarded up river "with the least delay" so that Johnson could set it. Late in the year 1854 Lee returned to St. Joseph to discover that the monument had only just arrived there. He stored it with Messrs. Donnell, Saxton and Potee, advised the Surveyor General of the situation and suggested that the monument be planted the next year. In April, 1855, U.S. Deputy Surveyor Charles A. Manners was issued instructions to set the iron monument, which he did on May 8, 1855. Manners also set four witness stones and marked four black oak trees.

At this same time, Manners was instructed to examine Johnson's survey of the 40°N base line, which he found grossly in error. He resurveyed the entire 108 miles of the base line and marked its point of intersection with the Sixth P.M. on June 11, 1856. He set the sandstone monument and four witness stones which he connected with a 7" elevation of earth.

In 1924 Leo M. Petersen, a U.S. Surveyor from the Government Land Office was instructed to restore the initial corner of the Kansas and Nebraska Public Surveys. He discovered that the cast iron monument had been toppled from its original base and set upright 2 1/2 feet to the north. The excavation of the witness stones and faint surface indications of a rectagular trench verified this relocation. On June 28, 1924 Petersen set a cement base on top of the original limestone base. In the cement he set an iron pipe with a brass cap marking the location. He then placed the original cast iron shaft over the pipe and secured it. His work has held the monument in place to the present day.

The sandstone monument marking the Sixth P.M. was apparently broken off and covered by roadbed many years ago. It has been unearthed and covered over at least three times: in 1976 by the U.S. Geodetic Survey, in 1985 by Larry Goracke, appointed Jefferson County Surveyor, and in 1986 by a group of surveyors from five states sponsored by the Professional Surveyors Association of Nebraska. The surveyors unearthed the base and lower portion of the shaft and have located the top portion of the monument. Their goal is to locate the missing middle section and completely restore the monument.

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SIGNIFICANCE

These surveyors' monuments and the witness stones which locate them are significant on the state level in the area of settlement for their role in the surveying of the public domain and resultant land transfer in five states. The period of significance begins with the setting of each monument. They were used by surveyors from that date on and are used today for the same purposes. Historically, the period of significance, by definition, would end in 1937.

Public lands date from the formation of the United States. The federal government acquired land through cession, treaty and purchase. Nearly two billion acres of land in 32 states (4/5 of the gross area of the U.S.) at one time or another have been part of the Public Domain. This land was transferred to private individuals by various types of land grants and through sale authorized by Public Land Laws.

Shortly after the formation of the United States, the federal government conceived an idea for a method to accumulate funds for its depleted treasury and to protect its western borders. It would sell land from its vast western (west of the Appalachians) holdings. To do so, the land had to be accurately located and described. In 1784, the Continental Congress appointed a committee to develop a plan to facilitate such transactions. The result was the 1785 Land Ordinance whose provisions determined the shape of land parcels, the numbering system for land division and the terms for purchase. A 1796 revision of this ordinance substanially reflects the system in use today.

The method for land location is called the rectangular survey system (sometimes referred to as the "township and range" system). Survey begins at the "initial point", which is the intersection of a principal meridian (a true meridian) and a base line, (run at right angles to the p.m.) of which there are 31 in the contiguous U.S. and five in Alaska. (see map) Six-milesquare townships are laid out and numbered north and south of the A line or column of townships is called a range and base line. they are numbered east or west of the principal meridian. township is divided into one-mile-square sections (640 acres) The sections can be further subdivided numbered from 1 to 36. and thus described and identified. Field and fence lines and road networks follow this rectangular system of land division, resulting in the now familiar pattern of squares, rectangles and right angles of the rural landscape.

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In surveying public lands, monuments are set with the intention of establishing a permanent marking of the lines and fixing the corner positions so that the location of the surveyed lands may always be definitely known. Witness stones are set to verify exact location of the monuments. Once monuments have been set and the survey accepted, they cannot be changed, even if technical error is later identified. These surveys are called cadastral surveys and are "the foundation upon which rests title to all land that is now, or was once, part of the Public Domain of the United States" (Cazier, p.107).

In Nebraska and Kansas survey was begun in 1854 with the determiniation of the  $40^\circ$  N latitude line (which became the base line for the Sixth P.M.) and its intersection with the Missouri River. This point, marked by the cast iron monumnent in Richardson, Doniphan and Brown counties, is the initial point for survey in Nebraska and Kansas, and was the reference point for land survey in much of the first settled areas of these two states. The  $40^\circ$  N line was run only 108 miles west to the Sixth Principal Meridian because of apprehensions of Indian interruption and because it was thought that settlement would not occur any further west. In fact the survey instructions do not include the Sixth P.M. They state:

At some future time, when necessary, it is proposed to start a principal meridian, extending on the north of such base to the Missouri river in Nebraska, and on the south of the same to the southern boundary of Kansas, which is the 37th parallel of north latitude. Although the public surveys will count from the principal meridian precisely as if the same were surveyed, the labor of such meridian survey will be now omitted, and that labor will be directed to insure practical results of more immediate importance. (Committee, p. 4)

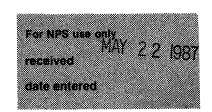
In 1858-59, however, the line was extended west to the Rocky Mountains. This base line and the corresponding Sixth Principal Meridian, marked by the sandstone monument in Thayer, Jefferson, Washington, and Republic counties, serve as the reference points for survey of public lands in all of Kansas and Nebraska, and approximately 95% of Wyoming, 75% of Colorado and 15% of South Dakota. (see map) These two monuments not only represent the larger survey system that made possible the rapid settlement of the western United States, but are also actual monuments, marking major points of reference, that have been used every day since they were set by public land surveyors in a five state area.

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Ge	ographica	ıl Data s	ee Continua	ition Shee	t	
Acreage of nom Quadrangle nar UT M Reference				Q	uadrangle scale	N/A
A	ting Northin	ıg	BZone	Easting	Northi	ing
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	ary description and	justification	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		175 J. 176	<del></del>
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List all states	and counties for pr	operties overlap	ping state or	county bour	ndaries	14 -2
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11. Fo	rm Prepar	ed By				
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title Directo	or, Nebraska Stat	e Historical	Society		date $4/3$	0/87
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Bibliography

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Kathleen Fimple, Preservation Historian Nebraska State Historical Society P.O. Box 82554 Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1986 (402) 471-4769

William L. Rynearson and Jack C. Fitch, Past Presidents Professional Surveyor's Association of Nebraska P.O. Box B (402) 563-5762 Columbus, Nebraska Continuation sheet

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### **United States Department of the Interior**National Park Service

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on number Page		
	Multiple Resource Area Thematic Group	dnr-11
Name NebraskaKansas P State KANSAS & NEBRASKA	ublic Land Survey TR	
Nomination/Type of Review	COVER Beth Grosvenson Date/S	Signature 6/19/87
1. Site No. RH00-062	Keeper Seth	Browens 6/1
	Attest	
2. Site No. JF00-072	Keeper Beth	Crosvena 6/
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